

and women in uniform. The war in Iraq is not over, but we're drawing closer to the day when our troops can come home. And when they come home, they will come home in victory.

The work you have done and are going to do is historical work. See, the consequences of success in Iraq will resonate far beyond that country's borders and will resonate when your children and grandchildren begin to study the history of peace. Success will frustrate Iran's ambitions to dominate the region. Success will show millions across the Middle East that a future of liberty and democracy is possible. Success will deny Al Qaida a safe haven for launching new attacks. Success in Iraq will mean that the American people are more secure at home.

In Iraq, Afghanistan, and beyond, our men and women in uniform have done everything we have asked of them and more. You've earned the thanks of every American.

You know, this is going to be my last Thanksgiving as President. Sometimes I am asked what I will miss most about the job. Well, above all, I'm going to miss spending time with men and women who have volunteered to serve the United States of America, the fine men and women who wear the uniform. We are blessed to have defenders of such character and courage. I'm grateful to the families who serve by your side. And I will always be thankful for the honor of having served as the Commander in Chief.

So Laura and I wish you and your families a safe and happy Thanksgiving. We join you in praying for our troops spending the holiday far from home. We pray for those who've been wounded in battle and for all who love and care for them. We hold in our thoughts and prayers the brave men and women who have given their lives and the families who mourn for them. We ask the Almighty to watch over everyone who puts on the uniform and has volunteered to serve this great land.

It's an honor to be with you today. May God bless you, and may God continue to bless the United States of America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:13 a.m. In his remarks, he referred to Brig. Gen. Stephen Townsend, USA, deputy commanding general (rear), 101st Airborne Division, and his wife Melissa; Patty Schloesser, wife of Maj. Gen. Jeffrey J. Schloesser, USA, commanding general, 101st Airborne Division; Maria McConville, wife of Brig. Gen. James C. McConville, USA, deputy commanding general (support), 101st Airborne Division; Theresa Vail, wife of Col. Thomas Vail, chief of staff, 101st Airborne Division; Gov. Steven L. Beshear of Kentucky; S. Sgt. Joshua Forbess, USA, President's Volunteer Service Award recipient on November 25; and Gen. David H. Petraeus, USA, commander, U.S. Central Command. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

## Remarks at the Thanksgiving Turkey Presentation Ceremony November 26, 2008

Thank you all. Please be seated. Welcome to the Rose Garden for the pardoning of the National Thanksgiving Turkey.

This is a tradition that dates back to the Presidency of Harry Truman. Just to be

safe, I will be pardoning a second bird—[laughter]—in the unlikely event the main act chickens out. [Laughter] Turkeys are not only the ones on edge this morning; you see, it turns out the Rose Garden is

Barney's turf. *[Laughter]* So the press corps is a little nervous as well. *[Laughter]*

I appreciate the representatives of the National Turkey Federation who have joined us: President Joel Brandenberger, Chairman Paul Hill, Paul's wife Mary June. Today's birds were hatched on the Hill family farm in Ellsworth, Iowa. Paul's son Nathan and daughter-in-law Betsy, along with grandsons Collin and Connor, did a fabulous job of raising the guests of honor.

I also welcome the children here from Cloverly Elementary School. And after I make my brief remarks, you will be welcome to come up and pet our feathered friends.

This is an election year, so it is fitting that the names of these two birds were chosen through the democratic process. After a long, drawn-out election season, when the people finally spoke, the name of the ticket sent here to the White House was Pumpkin and Pecan. *[Laughter]* Pumpkin is right there. *[Laughter]* Pecan is in an undisclosed location. *[Laughter]*

Pumpkin and Pecan have an exciting trip ahead of them. Later today they will fly to Disneyland aboard "Turkey One." *[Laughter]* Pumpkin will be the honorary grand marshal of Disneyland's Thanksgiving Day Parade. Together, these birds will gobble the rest of their days in "the happiest place on Earth." I just hope they stay humble there. *[Laughter]*

This is my final Thanksgiving as the President. Over the past 8 years, I have been given many reasons to be thankful. I'm thankful to our men and women in uniform, and I am incredibly proud to have

been their Commander in Chief. I am thankful for the armies of compassion, volunteers who feed the hungry and shelter the poor. I am thankful for the teachers and nurses and pastors and police officers and firefighters, and others who serve their neighbors and better their communities.

I'm thankful for the wonderful and supporting family that I have been blessed with. I'm grateful to Laura for her love. I'm grateful for two Thanksgiving miracles who were blessed—who we were blessed with 27 years ago: Barbara and Jenna. I'm thankful for the fact that my mother is doing well. And I—*[applause]*. And this year, we're looking forward to having another place at our Thanksgiving table with a son-in-law, and I'm thankful for Henry.

Most of all, I thank the American people for the tremendous privilege of serving as the President. In recent weeks, I've talked a lot about sprinting to the finish. Yet I've assured these turkeys they will not be trotting to their finish. *[Laughter]* That's because in keeping with a longstanding tradition, Pumpkin and Pecan are hereby granted a full and unconditional Presidential pardon.

I wish all Americans a happy Thanksgiving, and may God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:20 a.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Henry Hager, husband of Jenna Bush Hager. The Thanksgiving Day proclamation of November 21 is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

## The President's Radio Address *November 26, 2008*

Good morning. This week, Americans gather with loved ones to celebrate Thanksgiving. This holiday season is a time of fel-

lowship and peace. And it is a time to give thanks for our many blessings.